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SUBJECT: ETHIOPIAN G20 AGENDA CONCERNS

¶1. (SBU) Charge and DCM met with the Prime Minister's Economic Advisor, and G20 sherpa, Minister Newaye Christos Gebre-Ab September 15, at the latter's request. Gebre-Ab had just returned from the G20 sherpa meeting in the U.S.

¶2. (SBU) Noting that PM Meles would be representing views from all Africa during the G20 meeting, Gebre-Ab indicated that there were two issues in particular that Meles would wish to emphasize. First was follow-up to London G20 discussions regarding a prospective World Bank fund to promote food security. Gebre-Ab said that the African position was clearly in full support of the proposal, and the Ethiopian delegation wished to emphasize that rapid establishment and full funding at target levels are important to Africa. As well, efficient and timely disbursement from the fund by the Bank would be important to ensure realization of the fund's goals. For the latter point in particular, Gabre-Ab noted that strong support and interest by major partners such as the U.S. would be important, and he hoped such support would be made clear during the G20.

¶3. (SBU) Gebre-Ab also said that in London there had been discussion of utilization of International Monetary Fund (IMF) Special Drawing Rights (SDR,s) which were not being otherwise drawn down by some member states. Specifically, he said major economic powers such as the U.S. were obviously unlikely to draw on the newly-available SDR,s, and ideas had been discussed to utilize these to permit additional extension lending by the IMF to specific countries, within the parameters of borrowing limits as set by IMF policy. Interest accruing to the original beneficiary state could be maintained by the specific conditions of such lending, especially as that interest is set at concessional or marginal rates in any event. This would be a subject that the Ethiopian delegation, on behalf of fellow African states, would like to discuss further during the G20.

¶4. (SBU) Related to the above, Gebre-Ab said he would find it very useful to be able to have bilateral meeting(s) with USG officials, presumably from Treasury and State, just prior to the G20 meeting. He was uncertain as to the date of the immediate pre-G20 sherpa meeting, but said that if this were to be held September 23, for example, September 22 would seem a good time for such bilateral meeting(s).

¶5. (SBU) CDA indicated that we would pass along Gebre-Ab,s views and meeting request, and would advise him of any

information available prior to his expected September 20 departure from Ethiopia.

¶6. (SBU) Comment and action request: The Embassy supports a bilateral meeting or meetings with Gebre-Ab in advance of the G20 if at all possible. At minimum, such a meeting would be useful to convey to the Ethiopians, and by extension other Africans states, that the USG is interested in and listening to African views related to the G20 agenda. Embassy requests any information regarding possible bilateral meetings be provided to relay to Gebre-Ab prior to September 20, as well as any substantive information desired to be conveyed to him.
MEECE